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People of Iran Want Peace, Prosperity, Progress, Stability

By Michael Collins Piper

The most important thing that I can convey about Iran in general—my most memorable reaction in retrospect—is this simple concept: Americans need to ignore anything and everything they hear about modern-day Iran, its leader, its culture, and its people from the mass media in America.

It wasn't until I actually arrived in Tehran and spent a day or so there that it became so apparent to me that even I—who fancied myself as being reasonably well informed about that country—had come to Iran with a lot of misconceptions (prejudices, that is) that were imposed on me (and yes, it's a type of brainwashing) by the major media in America: everything from the nightly "news" broadcasts to the feature stories and other information (largely propaganda, both subtle and not-so-subtle) in the major news magazines.

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Facts & Myths About Iran . . .

REACHING OUT. President Ahmadinejad says all peoples of the world must respect one another to co-exist peacefully. Here he greets one of the rabbis from Neturei Karta USA. Rabbi Weiss of the same group spoke at the AFP Conference. The group's presence underscored one of the themes of the conference, namely, that all the people of the world can live together harmoniously. Iran also invited many "pro-Holocaust" scholars to tell their side as well. Contrary to what you heard on the mainstream news, the conference was a testament to freedom of speech, the very thing (via "democracy") we are supposed to be bringing to the people of the Mideast. What did most Western governments do? They condemned it.

As our plane prepared to land in Tehran, a message across the loudspeaker was rather jarring. It said that "by government decree" all women were required to cover their heads upon arrival in Iran. I knew this was the case, but to actually hear it broadcast over the airplane's public address system was, even for me, somewhat un-nerving. The mass media's image of oppressed women, being beaten and abused and forced to cover themselves from head to toe in dark, mysterious-looking garb, immediately came to mind. But I looked about the plane, at the array of women—Iranian and otherwise, dark-skinned, light-skinned, blonde and brunette, Eastern and Western, you name it—and I didn't see a single one of those ladies flinch. Not even the richest looking women aboard, Iranian ladies in elegant clothes and dripping in expensive jewelry, seemed to be fazed in the least.

And it was then, as I surveyed the people aboard that plane going to Tehran (from Frankfurt, Germany, my connection point from Washington, DC), I realized in my own mind, for the first time, that these were people who might soon be dead: innocent victims of a reign of fire from the sky (a very real Holocaust) either from American bombers or Israeli bombers or both. These Iranian people, living their lives, traveling freely back and forth from their country to others, are in the gunsights of America's George Bush and his Zionist allies in Washington and Tel Aviv.

Those Iranians are among the people whom 1,000 American Jewish rabbis —representing, by their sheer numbers, an overwhelming proportion of the synagogue-going American Jewish community—recently petitioned President Bush to attack, using American military resources (and risking the precious lives of American men and women) to do it. "If those rabbis, supposedly 'men of God,' want to wage war against these Iranians," I thought, "then let them do it. But they had better stop pestering Americans to fight another needless war for Israel." The realization that these living, breathing human beings from all walks of life—these Iranians—were the targets of the wrath of those war-crazed rabbis stayed with me throughout my entire time in Iran, a great burden for me as an American, knowing that the president of the United States is more in line with the thinking of those 1,000 war-mongering "religious" leaders than he is with the vast numbers of peace-loving Americans.

Although I was in Iran—and only in the capital city of Tehran—for some five days (arriving early Sunday morning and departing early Thursday morning) and spent most of the time at my hotel and at the meeting hall for the Holocaust conference (both of which were in the northern part of that expansive, sprawling city of 14 million people), I did get the opportunity to see much of Tehran, as did the other foreign speakers and attendees at the conference.

At the close of the conference on Tuesday evening, we were shuttled to a government center in central Tehran where we were formally greeted en masse by President Ahmadinejad, who later graciously posed for photographs and signed autographs and spoke (through translators) with the attendees who enthusiastically surrounded him to personally thank him for having dared to face global media assault for his comments about the Holocaust and (even more so) for having convened that controversial gathering.

Later, that evening, we were taken to a banquet at the modern and functional headquarters of the Iraqi foreign ministry, high atop the city on the mountainside with a magnificent overlook of Tehran. There we had the opportunity to meet and speak personally with Iraqi foreign minister Manovchghr Mottaki who hosted the dinner and there pledged continuing support for foreign political dissidents who dared to continue to speak out on the issue of the Holocaust and regarding the global influence of the Zionist power bloc.

PHOTOS BY MICHAEL COLLINS PIPER

TOP: Britain's Lady Michele Renouf (who also spoke at AFP's Labor Day weekend conference in Washington) is shown at left at the podium addressing the international conference on the Holocaust held in Tehran.
BOTTOM: Iran's very cordial Foreign Minister Manovchghr Mottaki (left) poses for a photograph with Portuguese journalist and researcher Flavio Consalves (right) at the end of the gala dinner Mottaki hosted for the foreign visitors to Iran who attended the conference on the Holocaust. The dinner was held at the Iranian foreign ministry where a lighted Christmas tree was on display.

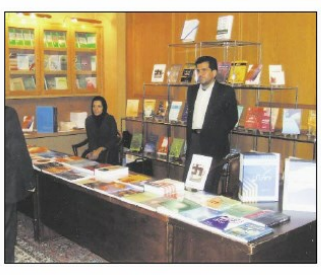
And believe it or not, right there on the grounds of the foreign ministry of the Islamic republic of Iran was a lighted Christmas tree. Yes, folks, Jesus Christ is revered by the Muslim people, and his birth is celebrated and honored in the capital of one of the world's most dedicated Muslim nations.

This is a point that will confuse and fluster Muslim-bashing pro-Israel Christian fundamentalists in light of their steadfast devotion to a foreign entity (Israel) that would never, under any circumstances, raise a Christmas tree and, in fact, does all it can to suppress celebrations of Christ by Christians (and Muslims) in Palestine. So there it was: a Christmas tree in Islamic Iran.

So shuttling back and forth across Tehran, we got to see the city (and its people) live, in action, so to speak. And what a busy place it is, certainly the busiest city that I've ever seen (and I've been to New York, Moscow, Tokyo and Kuala Lumpur, very busy big cities all). In general, in my personal estimation, the Iranians I met—ranging from waiters and hotel workers to diplomats and scholars—are good natured, wry in their wit, very friendly and hardly "anti-American," except perhaps for a naturally developing antipathy to George W. Bush and that small clique of his handlers and co-conspirators who want to kill the Iranian people, destroy their government, cripple their nuclear energy program, and turn their historic nation—the very land of Daniel of the Bible—into a cauldron of death and disaster as they have already done to Iraq, once a thriving republic.

Tehran is bustling, energetic, hardly the image that one would expect from the media coverage that the Western press conveys to its gullible audiences. There is no overhanging sense of gloom in Tehran, no specter of oppression, no feeling that secret police and observation cameras are close by, monitoring one's every move. People live their lives, going to and from work, just as they do anywhere else. Now, of course, the saloons have been shut down and certain forms of dress and decorum are expected of visitors and natives alike, but traveling through Tehran one doesn't feel any different than one might feel in any other major city.

There is one notable and striking exception to this: the fact that the traffic in Tehran is enormously overwhelming and the pedestrians and the drivers seem to have overcome the conflict and have forged a bizarre (if cooperative) way of dealing with the mess.



PHOTOS BY MICHAEL COLLINS PIPER

ABOVE: Australian-based revisionist spokesman, Dr. Fredrick Toben (right) who has lectured at numerous conferences sponsored by *American Free Press* and *The Barnes Review* history magazine, is shown being interviewed in Tehran by Iranian film-maker Nader Talebzadeh who (like Toben) also made an appearance at AFP's own conference in Washington over Labor Day weekend.
LEFT: A wide variety of literature on the subject of the Holocaust, but candid material on the intrigues of Israel were on open display during the recent conference in Tehran. *The New York Times* expressed disgust that AFP correspondent Michael Collins Piper's book, *The New Jerusalem*, was on display, as well as alarm at the event itself.

Thanks to the good offices (and good driving) of Iranian film-maker Nader Talebzadeh—who was one of the featured speakers at the ***American Free Press*** free speech conference held in Washington over Labor Day weekend this past fall—I had the opportunity to get some additional travel time throughout the amazing city, during which time Talebzadeh interviewed me in his car on camera (with the city's expanse in the background) for a documentary he is making.

Through Talebzadeh I also had the chance to meet the talented Muslim actor who lovingly portrayed Jesus Christ in Talebzadeh's soon-to-be-released major motion picture on the last days of Christ on Earth (financed by the Iranian ministry of culture) that—by the estimation of critics who have seen advance screenings—rivals even Mel Gibson's epic ***Passion of the Christ***.

Just a few thoughts and impressions about one of the most misrepresented nations on Earth today. Much more could be said, but this gives a brief overview of some things that need to be said and understood.

A journalist specializing in media critique, Michael Collins Piper is the author of ***Final Judgment***, the controversial "underground bestseller." He is also the author of ***The High Priests of War***, ***The New Jerusalem*** and ***The Judas Goats*** — all available from ***American Free Press*** and ***America First Books.***

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